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Health risk factors: how ACT residents shape up - Apr 2006

ACT residents are getting fatter with a greater proportion of overweight and obese people in the Territory than ever before, according to information released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Further analysis from the National Health Survey (NHS) 2004-05 indicated an increased number of ACT residents who reported 'overweight' and 'obese' Body Mass Indexes (BMI's) (see media note). Men reported an increase in 'overweight' and 'obese' BMI's from 49% in 1995 to 56% in 2004-05, while women reported an increase from 33% to 42%.

ACT residents rated a mixed bag when it came to other health risk behaviours. The ACT had the largest (9%) proportion of people who exercised at 'high' exercise levels (see media note) compared with the national level of 6%, and the lowest proportion of people exercising at 'sedentary' levels (23% compared to 34% nationally).

The ACT also had the lowest proportion (17%) of current smokers compared to the rest of Australia (23%).

Some of the other analysis included:

- ACT residents reported slightly higher than average alcohol consumption patterns compared to the rest of Australia (53% consumed alcohol at low risk levels compared to the national average of 49%).
- There had been an increase in risky drinking behaviour since 1995.
- Nearly 60% of ACT residents regarded their health as either very good or excellent.

Further details are in **ACT Stats, April 2006** (cat. no. 1344.8.55.001) available free of charge.

Media notes:

Body Mass Index (BMI): Calculated from reported height and weight information using the formulated weight (kg) divided by the square of height (m).

Exercise Levels

High: More than 3200 minutes of exercise plus 2 hours of more vigorous exercise in the past two weeks.

Sedentary: Less than 100 minutes (including no exercise) in the past two weeks.

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